

## Social Exclusion and the Empowerment of Muslims: A study of Uttar Pradesh

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### Abstract

Social exclusion broadly refers to lack of participation in social life. It is a powerful form of discriminatory practice. In course of human development, exclusion has taken the form of segregating a group of people from the social, political, economic, cultural, educational domains of societal life. Giddens defines social exclusion as "it is not about gradations of inequality, but about mechanism that act to detach groups of people from the social mainstream". Muslim in India remains far below the national average in almost all aspect of life. Sacchar committee estimates that the situation of Muslims in India is that of a deprived community which is above that of SCs and STs but below that of Hindu general, Hindu OBCs and other socio-religious category in almost all indicators of development. The due representation of Muslims in parliament, state legislature and Panchayati raj institution is crucial for the country because this is the only way in which this excluded community can keep pace with other communities in development. Other scholars estimate that the situation of Muslims in India is that of an excluded community in economic, educational and political terms. This paper examines the literature on Muslim exclusion in India and suggests some measures for formulating an inclusion policy for them.

**Keywords:** Exclusion, Development, Muslim Empowerment.

### INTRODUCTION

The term "Social Exclusion" has its origin in France in the work of Rene Lenoir in 1974 (Vaani, 2010) and later on it developed under the former French President of the European commission, Jacques Delors who connected this notion with the poverty programmes of the union in the beginning of 1990's (Ziyauddin K.M and Kasi Eshwarappa, 2009). This economic interpretation of exclusion continued in the work of Amartya Sen in a multi-dimensional view of poverty. He argued that the function of the concept of social exclusion was not to widen or otherwise alter our concept of poverty, but rather to highlight the relational aspect and processes which underpin poverty (Sen, 2000). Social exclusion deals with the areas which are related to poverty such as unemployment, homelessness, poor health, low educational qualification etc. Social exclusion evolved from this economic aspect to become the concern of all social scientists from 1990's.

In its broadest aspect exclusion refers to lack of participation in social life. It discriminate people from social, political, economic, cultural, educational domains of societal life. Social exclusion can be broadly defined as the process through which individual or the group of individuals are discriminated from full participation in the society in which they live (Hann, 1997). So, generally, exclusion is the inability of an individual to participate in the basic political, economic and social functioning of society. Buvinic (2004, p. 5) defines social exclusion as "the denial of equal access to opportunities imposed by certain group in society upon other". From the above definitions emerge three distinguishing feature of social exclusion (1) it affects culturally define group (2) it's embedded in segregation between them (3) results in deprivation or low income for those excluded (Thorat, 2007). The concept of social exclusion has two defining characteristics. *Firstly*, it is a multidimensional concept which is not only economic but also social, cultural

and political. *Secondly*, it focuses on the relations and processes that cause discrimination. Social exclusion is considered as a discrimination which refers as the process through which group are wholly or partially restricted from full participation in the economic, educational and social institution that defines membership. Exclusion involves both the act of restricting access and consequences that follow basically from exclusion (Thorat, 2007).

### **Social Exclusion in India**

India is just like a rainbow where different castes, religions, races, languages, tribes and cultures are found. In terms of religion, Hindus are in a majority and others such as Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists and Parsis are in a minority. Among minorities Muslims are in the top in relation to the population. They constitute about 14% of the total population but they are more prone to the discrimination in the social institution. They are excluded from participation in the basic educational, political, social, and economic institution of the society (Waheed, Introduction, 2007). As the largest minority Muslims in India are one of the most backward socio-religious communities, whose performance in the crucial Human Development Index such as level of literacy, education and health is far behind than other socio-religious communities (Faisal, 2013, p. 156). The exclusion of Muslims is not a new phenomenon which developed after the independence of India but they were excluded before the independence as Hunter Commission mention in its report (Robinson, 1993, p. 1). The report was published in 1871 under the title "Our Indian Musalmans" conducted by Sir William Hunter at the behest of the Viceroy, Lord Mayo, to find out the reasons for Muslim unrest in the country. Hunter gave the first official picture of the excluded status of Muslim in the country. According to the study, within Grade-three assistant engineers there were 14 Hindus and 2 Muslims; among sub-engineer and supervisors 24 Hindus and only 1 Muslim; among superintendents 63 Hindus and 2 Muslims; in the finance department 50 Hindus and no Muslim and among lawyers 239 Hindu and only 1 Muslim. According to the study, a Muslim could not hope any government job except the post of a guard, peon or an attendant (Mahmood S T, 2007).

However, it took about three decades after the independence for the government to pay any attention to the deplorable socio-economic conditions of Muslims in India. The initiative was taken by the Central Government as it constituted a high-power committee in 1980 to study the status of minorities, Schedule Castes (SCs) and Schedule Tribes (STs) and other weaker sections. The 10 member committee under Gopal Singh submitted its report on June 14, 1983. The 118 page 'Report on Minorities' contains important data on the participation and performance of minorities in education and employment. In the absence of official data on the conditions of religious minorities the committee relied on data collected from 80 districts. Nevertheless despite call for its release the report had to wait until 1989 to be made public (Shahabuddin, 2004). Major findings of this report are:

1. The representation of Muslims in Indian Administrative Services was 3.22%; in Indian Police Services it was 2.64%; and in Indian Forest Services it was 3.14%. So in all administrative services Muslim constitute only 3.04% which was quite low in comparison to their population proportion.
2. In 1980, Muslims registration in employment exchange was 6.77% which was low in comparison to the Muslim population.
3. The Muslim's employment share in public sector banks was 2.18% of the total. In office cadre it was only 2.27% of the total, in clerical position it was 2.12%, and in subordinate cadre it was 2.23% of the total population.
4. In the central government offices ,Muslim's employment was 4.41% of the total but in Class-I post it was an abysmal 1.61%, in Class-II post it was 3.0%, in Class –III post it was 4.41%, and in Class-IV it was 5.12%.
5. Only 4.52% of all judges were found to be Muslims and surprisingly no Muslim judge was found in High Court.
6. In State Government offices, Muslims constitute 6.01% of total employees, but in Class-I post Muslims were 3.30%, in Class-II post it was 4.62%, and in Class -IV it was 6.35%.

7. In the private enterprises, Muslims constituted 8.16% of the total employees. In supervisory technical cadre, their percentage was only 2.49%. In non-technical supervisory cadre, their percentage was 8.28%. They constituted 7.93% of the total work force (Singh, 1983).

The report concluded that “There was a “sense of discrimination prevailing among the minorities” and that it “must be eliminated, root and branch, if we want the minorities to form an effective part of the mainstream” (Singh, 1983). This shows the Muslims formed an excluded community which required special measures to bring them into the mainstream of social, economic and educational life (Hasan, 2009, p. 8).

After Gopal Singh committee Report another committee was set up in 1996 and chaired by S. Varadarajan, a member of National Commission for Minorities (NCM) submitted its report on 6<sup>th</sup> May. This report presented detailed data on the share of minorities in central services and banking sector and concluded that ‘ the representation of minorities, especially Muslims, in the state and all India services is very low and bear no relation to their population, and there has been no purposeful action to remedy this imbalance’. Based on the data collection on the share of minorities, which it found was ‘deplorably disproportionate to their population in various states’ the NCM in its report for 1998-1999 specifically recommended for 15% representation of the minorities with a break up of 10% for the Muslims and 5% for other minorities taken together (Mahmood S T, 2007).

There have been efforts by scholars for knowing the socio-economic conditions of excluded groups of Indian society such as Muslims. Committees and scholars have repeatedly said that the Muslims in India facing serious exclusion in all aspects of socio-economic life. These observations could not attract the attention of policy makers on the excluded condition of this community.

Further, a high level committee appointed by the prime minister under the chairmanship of Justice Rajindra Sacchar, retired Chief justice of the Delhi high Court to study the socio-economic and educational status of Muslim Community in India gave a report (Chisti, 2007). This report was submitted by the committee in November 2006 and marked a turning point in documenting the exclusion of Muslims in India. Sacchar Committee collected data from whole country and received oral detail and written presentation from 13 states that have significant Muslim population. The committee also collected data from Indian Air Force and the Navy on the number of Muslims in these services but did not include the same in the report on the specific request from the Defence Ministry. The report indicates the gravity of social exclusion of Muslims in India. Major findings of the report are as follows:

1. The literacy rate of Muslims in 2001 was 59.1% which is far below the national average that is 65.1%.
2. In the age group of 6-14 years, 25% of Muslims children are either dropouts or have never attended the school. The national average enrolment ratio of the Muslim is found to be 12.79% in 2011-2012 which is near to the total population (14%) at national level but the share of Muslim students decline as educational level goes up (Hasan Sajjad, 2015)
3. Only 3% of Muslim children go to the Madarasas and so their role in Muslim life is minimal.
4. Out of total Muslim population of around 14 crore, only about 4 crore Muslims have received some education- 192 lakhs are educated till primary level, 105lakh till secondary level, 73 lakhs till higher secondary and 24 lakhs till graduate level.
5. The disparity in Graduate Attainment Rates between Muslims and other categories has been widening since the 1970s in rural and urban areas. According to the report only 1 out of 25 undergraduates students and 1 out of 50 post-graduates students in the ‘premier colleges’ are Muslims.
6. About 7% of population aged 20 years and above are graduates or diploma holders but among Muslim only 4% population reach that level.

**Representation in Employment**

1. Working population ratio for Muslims is significantly lower than for all other socio-religious communities in rural areas but only marginally lower in urban areas (Sacchar, 2006, p. 89).
2. In rural areas the committee say that the share of Muslim workers engaged in agriculture is much lower than the other groups, their participation in manufacturing of tobacco and textile products is much higher than the other socio-religious communities (Sacchar, 2006, pp. 91-92).
3. The most striking feature is the relatively high share of Muslim workers engaged in self-employment activities, primarily in urban areas and for women workers. Participation of Muslim salaried workers in both the public and private sectors is quite low, and the average salary of workers is lower than others (Sacchar, 2006, p. 94).
4. Participation of Muslims in informal sector is much higher than the average population (Sacchar, 2006, p. 96).
5. The presence of Muslims was found to be only 3% in the IAS, 1.8% in the IFS and 4% in the IPS. However Muslims who have secured high-level appointments could do it mostly as 'promoted candidates' their share as direct recruits through competitive examinations is low at 2.4%, 1.9% and 2.3% respectively (Sacchar, 2006, p. 165).
6. The committee received data from the eight state and reveals that the representation of Muslims in education department is only 6.5%, which is nearly their half of the population share (Sacchar, 2006, p. 172).
7. In judiciary from the Advocate General to district and session Judges, there are only 5 Muslims in West Bengal and 9 in Assam. In Jammu and Kashmir where Muslims are 66.97% of the population, they account only 48.3% jobs in judiciary (Sacchar, 2006, p. 173).
8. The Muslims representation in health department is just about 4.4% that is far below their population share (Sacchar, 2006, p. 173).

**Economic Status**

1. Incidence of poverty: The incidence of poverty is measured by the proportion of poor persons (referred to as Head Count Ratio). At national level, the incidence of poverty is highest among Muslim-OBC (38), followed by Muslim- General (35). In contrast, the proportion of poor among Hindu-OBCs (27) is lower than even the national average (28).
2. Ownership average size of land holdings: Average land holdings of Hindu-OBCs are clearly much better (about twice) than that of Muslim-OBCs and Muslim-General. In fact, the average land holdings of Hindu-OBCs (1.9 acres). The differences in average land holdings Muslim-General and Muslim-OBCs are almost the same (Faisal, 2013, pp. 160-61).

**Health and Life Standard**

1. There is a scarcity of medical facilities in larger villages with a substantial Muslim concentration. About 40% of large villages with a substantial Muslim concentration do not have any medical facilities (Sacchar, 2006, pp. 143-44).
2. As far as living conditions are concerned, Muslims seems to be at par with SCs, STs and OBCs with respect to house structures (pucca or not) and slightly better placed regarding toilet facilities. The availability of piped water, electricity and modern fuel (L.P.G/Electricity) is lower among Muslims (Sacchar, 2006, pp. 146-48).

### **Rangnath Mishra Commission**

The report of the National Commission for Religious and Linguistic Minorities, headed by former Chief Justice of India Rangnath Mishra, went into the backwardness of minorities mainly Muslims. The commission noted that the minorities especially the Muslims are very much underrepresented in education, employment especially in public sector, livelihood etc. The commission says that among the religious minorities, literacy rate among the Parsi community is the highest 97.9% followed by Jains 94.1%, Christians 80.3%, Buddhists 72.9%, Sikhs 69.4% and the Muslims 59.1% which is lowest among all the minorities and also lower than in the majority Hindu community 65.1%. In terms of gender gap in literacy both males and females among the Jains population have very high literacy rate of 97.4% and 90.6% respectively followed by Christians at 84.4% for males and 76.2% for females, Buddhists 83.1% in males and 61.7% in females, Sikhs 75.2% in males and 63.1% in females and in Muslims 67.6% in males and 50.1% in females while in Hindu community 76.2% in males and 53.2% in females. In terms of employment about 20.7% of the Muslims work as cultivators where as about 33.1% of Hindus are cultivators. About 37% of the Hindu households were dependent on self-employment in agriculture while only 26% of Muslims households are in self-employment in agriculture. In urban areas the proportion of Hindu households depending on self-employment 36% while in Muslims it is 49% which shows that Muslims are mostly artisans in cottage industry. In regular wage or salary Hindus constitute about 43% which is higher than the Muslims constituted 30% which shows that the Muslims are backward in the organised sector of the economy. In casual labour Hindus are 12% whereas Muslims are 14% which shows that there are most Muslims in the unorganised sector of the economy (Mishra R. , 2007, pp. 16-27). This data release that the Muslims are excluded in terms of education and employment. The commission recommended 10% reservation for Muslims and 5% for other minorities in employment especially in the public sector and added that in case of non-availability of Muslims to fill the 10% earmarked seats, these may be made available to other minorities but in "no case" shall any seat within the recommended 15% be given to anybody from the majority community. The Commission also suggested an alternative route for reservation to minorities if there is "insurmountable difficulty" in implementing the recommendation for 15% reservation. In this regard it said that the minorities constitute 8.4% of the total other backward classes (OBCs) population according to Mandal Commission report so in the 27% OBCs quota, an 8.4% sub quota should be earmarked for minorities and the internal breakup should be 6% for the Muslims and 2.4% for other minorities (Mishra R. , 2007, pp. 144-150).

### **Muslims in Uttar Pradesh**

Historically in Uttar Pradesh two reasons were responsible for the deplorable condition of the Muslims. Firstly, the Mutiny of 1857, the British foisted responsibility for it on Muslims and so they bore the brunt of their vendetta. The British had replaced them as rulers and they had given the call for jihad against these new rulers and this was taken to be enough proof of their guilt. Nehru explains "after 1857, the heavy hand of the British fell more heavily on the Muslims than on the Hindus. They considered the Muslims are more aggressive and militant, possessing memories of recent rule in India and therefore more dangerous". Brutal repression by the British coupled with loss of power plunged the Muslim community into despair and despondency. They were at their lowest ebb and the future appeared to be bleak and ominous. Chand describes the situation of the community as follows: "Darkness enveloped the community and destiny boding nothing but ill threatened them" (Chand, 1967, p. 349). The distrust and suspicion with which the British regarded the Muslims led to a decline in their number in the administrative, judicial and military services after the mutiny. Secondly, partition of India did not resolve the problem of Muslims. The demand of the Muslim league for a separate state was realised, but it was only at the cost of those Muslims who were left in India. They were a substantial minority of about 35 million and they continued to be affected by the event of 1947 for a long time afterwards. They were now left as a socio-economically, politically and geographically uprooted population (Gautam, 1967, p. 135). Their condition was made worse by the fact that their loyalty to the nation was being questioned in an atmosphere of mutual distrust and suspicion between the Hindus and the Muslims. "They were a minority acutely blamed by the Hindus for the partition of the country, a minority regard as a representative of an anti-Indian, hostile, divisive and subversive influence which had shattered the aspirations for national unity" (Murphy, 1955, p. 124). Further, the Muslims were depleted in numbers and their proportion in the population declined. It was a crisis that was more catastrophic in its dimensions than that which the

Muslims had experienced when they have lost their predominant position to the British after the mutiny of 1857 (Schermerhorn, 1978, p. 163). Now the protective measures introduced by the British to safeguard the Muslim position were abolished, separate electorates gave way to joint electorates and the limited franchise was soon replaced by universal franchise, zamindari was abolished in quick succession, the Muslim league was disbanded as it could not be retained as a separate Muslim organisation and the operation of the evacuee property act was such that many of them lost their property (Husain, 1965, pp. 129-33). All these factors operated simultaneously to further exacerbate the worsening political and economic status of the Muslims after independence. There was a considerable migration from Uttar Pradesh in the wake of partition. It not only led to a decline in numbers but it also weakened the social, economic position

The backward condition of Muslims in Uttar Pradesh has been traced to the impact of the mutiny and partition and it can be observed clearly in the present scenario. Uttar Pradesh is the most populous state of the nation having the population of 19.96 crore which is 16.62% of the total population of the country. Muslim constitute 19.26% of the population and are the largest minority group of the state but their percentage in education, employment, government jobs etc. is not according to their population (Census 2011). In terms of education only 9.64% of Muslim children are gaining elementary education and as the level of education increases the dropout rate of the Muslim students are also rises. In terms of employment Muslims in self-employed agriculture constitute only 7% of the total population whereas about 22.5% Hindu upper caste is in the agricultural self-employment (Hasan Sajjad, 2015, pp. 23-30). About 18.5% of Muslim population work as agricultural labourers and on the other hand only 5.1% of Hindu upper castes are in it (Shariff, 2011). In non-agricultural, self-employment only 10.2% are of Hindu upper caste while the Muslims constitute about 22.5% which shows their excluded position in the economy of the state. The participation of Muslim workers in salaried jobs is quite low and it is only about 14% while 45.9% household of Hindu upper caste workers are engaged in it. In fact, the dominance of casual labour in Muslims employment is notable since 28.6% labourers are engaged in such work compare to 4.6% of Hindu upper caste. In terms of employment in the formal sector, Muslims constitute 15.2% as against 25.3% Hindus upper caste and in the public sector, Muslim representation is about 3.2% which is very low compare to 25.5 % among Hindu upper caste. Due to lack of employment the percentage share of poverty is found to be higher among Muslims of Uttar Pradesh in urban and rural areas. In urban areas it is 43% compare to 27% among Hindu upper caste and in rural areas among Muslims it is 37% and among Hindus upper caste it is 33% respectively.

## **Conclusion**

The primary initiative to combat the problem of the exclusion of the Muslim should come from the community itself. They have to recognize the fact that blaming the majority group for their deprived condition would not help them to improve their position. They have to ensure that their participation in social, political and economic life of the country is enhanced so that they become equal partners in development. This underlines the importance of forming organisations for an inclusive society. Organisations must be formed for removing their Socio-Economic and Educational exclusion. In the development literature, those communities endowed with a rich stock of social networks and civic organisations have been shown to be in a stronger position to achieve progress. (Faisal, 2013, pp. 171-72)

Government started different programme for the welfare of minorities particularly targeting socio-economic and educational exclusion of Muslims. In these programmes government focuses on the improvement of the school education of the minorities through different schemes under Sarv Siksha Abiyan, Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidhyalay and other similar different schemes. Government also focuses on the Madarasas education through modernisation of Madarsa education keeping in view the importance of addressing this need. Government also started some scholarship schemes like Maulana Azad Education Foundation for providing financial assistance to the meritorious student of pre-matric and matric. In terms of economic activities and employment government started Swarnjayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana and Swarnjayanti Shahari rojgar Yojana having an objective of bringing assisted poor rural and urban families above the poverty line by providing them income generated assets through a mix of bank credit and government subsidy. Government also provided some technical programme through ITI's for

the improvement of their skills. Government also started Indira Awas Yojya particularly for the poor beneficiaries of the minority community living in rural areas by earmarking certain percentage for physical and financial targets.

A strategy suggested for overcoming a socio-economic and educational exclusion of Muslims by Varadarajan commission and the Rangnath Mishra commission was that of reservation of 10% jobs for them in government services at state or centre in all cadre and grades. The Rangnath Mishra commission also suggested an alternative route for reservation to Muslims if there is "insurmountable difficulty" in implementing the recommendation for 10% reservation. This alternative route was that of giving them 6% quota within the 27% reservation for other backward classes. Both these alternatives of 10% in all posts or 6% in other backward classes' posts are difficult to implement because reservation on a religious basis is considered a violation of the constitution and it has also been struck down by courts. Another strategy for the inclusion of Muslims is that of their empowerment which is necessary for their development to bring them at par with other socio-religious community. Empowerment of excluded sections such as women, tribes, schedule castes, backward communities, etc. has become a buzzword for political leaders, policy makers, academicians and social activists in India. Empowerment of Muslims has not been given as much currency in the literature on inclusion as these other excluded section. Empowerment is giving power to the excluded sections which must form a state sponsored strategy.

The due representation of Muslim in political institutions particularly at the grass roots level is crucial because this is the only way in which this excluded socio-religious community can keep pace with other in the development process. Sacchar commission report noted that low participation of the Muslims in the local bodies resulted in development benefits failing to reach them. Sacchar commission write "the participation of Muslims nearly all political spaces is low which can have an adverse impact on the Indian society and polity in the long run....they don't have the necessary influences or the opportunity to either change or even influence events which enables their meaningful and active participation in development process" (Sacchar, 2006). The commission recommended a careful conceived nomination for the due representation of the Muslim community at the local level. Such a mechanism would ensure that a large number of Muslims will be participating in local bodies. The commission also recommended that the state government can enact appropriate laws for this purpose (Sacchar, 2006).

Thus the participation of a large number of Muslims in local bodies is necessary to increase the influence of the community and so their participation in the development process. Increased representation of Muslims in local bodies is a necessary condition for their inclusion in the development process because they can then influence the social and economic policies at the grass root level. However, having a large number of Muslims in local bodies is not an end in itself; but it is a means to an end- the end being the participation of Muslims in decision making to initiate development. The representation of Muslims can be real and effective only if they are empowered. Empowerment has a multifaceted phenomenon which has the following dimensions (1) social dimension having information and awareness about institution of change; (2) political dimension having the capacity to effectively engage in decision making processes and participation in collective decision making and (3) Economic dimension having ability to initiate development (Verma & Raj, 2006). This paper argues that Muslims representative must be empowered so that they are brought under a three pronged strategy which is social, political and economic. An inclusion policy for the Muslims must ensure that they are not only duly represented in political body at the grass roots but that these representatives are also made aware of these institutions, have the capacity to participate in decision making and the ability to initiate development.

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